

LONE WOLF

AND

子連れ狼

CUB

VOLUME 7

CLOUD
DRAGON,
WIND TIGER

By KAZUO KOIKE
& GOSEKI KOJIMA



子連水狼

LONE WOLF AND CUB



story
KAZUO KOIKE
art
GOSEKI KOJIMA



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CLOUD
DRAGON,
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子連れ狼



VOLUME

7

A NOTE TO READERS

Lone Wolf and Cub is famous for its carefully researched re-creation of Edo-Period Japan. To preserve the flavor of the work, we have chosen to retain many Edo-Period terms that have no direct equivalents in English. Japanese is written in a mix of Chinese ideograms and a syllabic writing system, resulting in numerous synonyms. In the glossary, you may encounter words with multiple meanings. These are words written with Chinese ideograms that are pronounced the same but carry different meanings. A Japanese reader seeing the different ideograms would know instantly which meaning it is, but these synonyms can cause confusion when Japanese is spelled out in our alphabet. *O-yurushi o* (please forgive us)!

LONE WOLF AND CUB



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Dragnet | 9 |
| Night Stalker | 68 |
| Cloud Dragon, Wind Tiger | 128 |
| Inn of the Last Chrysanthemum | 188 |
| Penal Code Article Seventy-Nine | 247 |
| Glossary | 306 |
| Creator Profiles | 309 |
| The Ronin Report | 311 |

the thirty-fourth



Dragnet



THE URA-KARU
ARE THE SHOGUN'S
ASSASSINS. MY LORD!
WE LOSE FACE EVERY DAY
WE LET ODAHIITO
RUN FREE!

PLEASE,
MY LORD WE
MUST TERMINATE
HIS MANDATE-
ATEKIT



LORD RETSUDŌ!
TOO MANY PEOPLE
HAVE ALREADY HEARD
ABOUT THIS LONG
WOLF AND
CUB

IF THE
SHOGUNATE
BECOMES SERIOUS
ABOUT INVESTIGATING
THE ITO CASE, THE
FIRE COULD SPREAD
TO OUR OWN
FRONT DOOR!

THERE
IS ALREADY TOO
MUCH TALK IN THE
STREETS ABOUT OSAKI'S
FEUD WITH THE YAGI
WE'RE RUNNING OUT
OF TIME!

ITO
CUT DOWN
KURAKO-SAMA! AND
HARU-SAMA, MY LORD!
DON'T YOU DESIRE
REVENGE?



IF WE MOBILIZE
ALL OUR FEAR, GREY
WOLVES WILL CARRY
THE DAY. HIS SON-AND-
GRANDSON
CANNOT DEFEAT
US ALL!

THE SHADO-
WELL OF THE
YAGI IS
UNFATHOMABLE!

LORD
RETSUDŌ! WE
IMPLORE YOU—ISSUE
THE ASSASSINATION
ORDER!



NEVER!





TO THE
OUTSIDE WORLD,
AT LEAST, WE MUST
DEFEND THIS PRIN-
CIPLE TO THE
LAST!

FIND
ANOTHER
WAY TO
DESTROY
ITTO!



MY LORD...
WHAT ABOUT A
DOGA-DO-YOI?



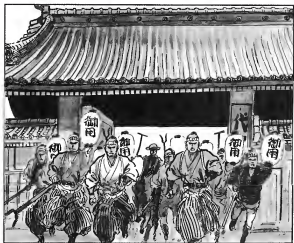
SET THE *ASHIKAGASAMA*
AWAKE TO TRACK DOWN ITTO,
AND ONCE THEY FIND HIM, PRES-
SURE THE *ASHIKO-BOSSHO* COM-
MISSIONER OF FINANCE TO HAVE
THE LOCAL *SHINSEI* ORDER
A *DOGA-DO-YOI*!

KHA!



NOT EVEN ITTO'S SWORD CAN
STAVE OFF HUNDREDS OF POLICE!
ESPECIALLY WITH A CHILD IN TOWN...
AND IF HE *DOES* RESIST, THEN THAT
IN ITSELF WILL SET HIM UP
FOR CRUCIFIXION.







SEEKING TO EMPLOY AND "REFORM" THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ARMED-AND- MONG NONETHESS, THEIR NAMES FOREVER REMOVED FROM THE RECORDS OF THE ANNETT-20- 2ND CENSUS FOR CRIMES AND OTHER IRREGULARITIES, THE TOKUJAWA SHOGUNATE INSTITUTED A POLICY OF BOUNDING UP VIOLANTS FOR EXILE TO THE GOLD MINES OF SAGO ISLAND OR THE BRUTISH LABOR CHAPPS OF TSURUDA ISLAND.



ABANDONED-ALONG/
THE VAST MAJORITY
OF THESE ROOTLESS
PEOPLE HAD BEEN
EXPELLED FROM
SOCIETY FOR THEIR
POVERTY OR "MORAL
DEVIANCE," OR HAD
BEEN DISOWNED BY
PARENTS, EXILED FOR
CRIMES, AND OTHER-
WISE DRIVEN FROM
THEIR PLACES OF
BIRTH.



THE DRAMAS
FOR IMPRESSMENT,
FROM WHICH FEW
RETURNED ALIVE,
WERE KNOWN AS
ROSE-HO-PO, AND
STRUCK TERROR
INTO THE HEARTS
OF THE DISPOS-
SESSED.

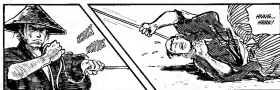
















IT'S
DESPERATE

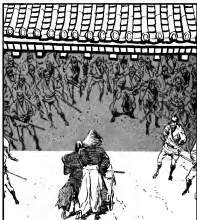


BUT HOW
LONG CAN HE
FIGHT OFF THE
JAPANESE?

THE DARKWOODS
KNOW ALL ITS OFFICERS ON
ALERT. THEY'VE EVEN CALLED
IN SOLDIERS FROM SUMIYAMA.
THEY'RE READY FOR
ANYTHING.



IT'D DOESN'T
KNOW WHAT
HE'S WALKING
INTO. THE
PATETIC
FOOL...













DO YOU GO CRAWLING
TO SUMA-AMA FOR TROOPS
EVERY TIME YOU ARE CALLED
UPON BY THE SHOGUNATE
TO PERFORM A DUTY?
DOSSA-DO-DEMY!

THIS WHOLE DRAMMA
IS NOTHING MORE THAN AN
EXCUSE TO SEIZE ARM-AND THE
KASAGO ARE BEHIND IT! THEY
FORCED THE KASAGO-
BOSS'S HAND!



YOU'RE
GIVEN
ME ALL
THE PROOF
I NEED!





UM...
MINATY

I'LL KILL
UNTIL MY BLADES
ARE FOREVER STAINED
RED! I'LL BUILD A
MOUNTAIN OF
CORPSES!

AND WHEN
YOUR PARANOID
IS A CHIRPING ROOSTER, THE
OFFICIAL INVESTIGA-
TIONS WILL
BEGIN!



AND
THEY WILL
BECOME
PILGRIMS...

...WHEN THEY
FIND SOME NEW
TROOPS LIKE HAVING
THE CORPSES!



YOU BRAG OF THE WISDOM
OF BOUNDING UP JOMMY WITH
YOUR POSH-BO-PO! DO YOU KNOW
HOW MANY JOMMY WALKED THE
COUNTRY, NOW THAT THE SHOGUNATE
HAS CRUSHED SO MANY BARRIERS AND
IMMERSED THEIR MANY FEARS
OF THOUSANDS!

DRIVE THEM INTO A
CORNER WITH YOUR FOOLISH
TACTICS, AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN?
NO JOMMY WILL WILLINGLY WORK
AS A SLAVE! THEY WILL ALL
FIGHT... TO THE
DEATH!



IF THEY UNITE, YOU'LL
HAVE AN INSURRECTION
ON YOUR HANDS! THERE ARE
PLENTY OF *SHAMANS* READY
TO RISE UP AGAINST YOU!
NO WASTING THE *SHOJO*!
FRET ABOUT THE
SHOJO PROBLEM.

ALREADY
THEY CAN BARELY
SLEEP AT NIGHT
FOR WORRY!



AND NOW THE *SHAMANS*
WOULD BREATHE
LIFE INTO THE *SHOJO*!
EMBERS, FAN THEM INTO A
FLAMING *SHOJO*!

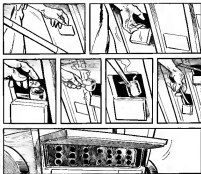
JUST TO
SEND ME INTO
EXILE!

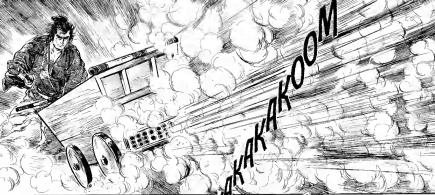


IMAGINE THE *SHAMANS*!
THE *SHOJO*'S OWN EXECUTIONER,
ARRESTED IN A *SHOJO*-*SHOJO* DYING
SURROUNDED BY A *SHOJO* OF
COMPASSION! WHEN THE *SHOJO* HEARS
THAT, THEY'LL THEIR *SHOJO* AGENT!
THEY'LL TAKE UP ARMS. THE *SHOJO*
WILL DEMAND AN ACCOUNTING...
AND WHAT WILL THEY
FIND?





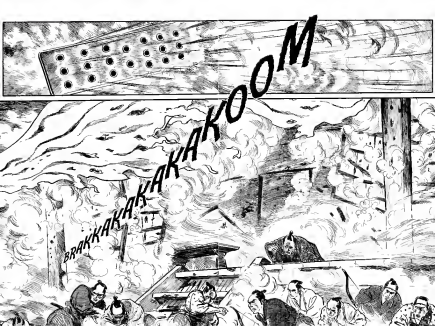


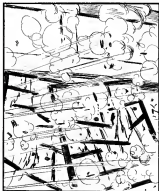


THE NAUPLU-FEE WAS ABOUT TO REVEAL THE REAL REASON OF THE DISASTROUS TRAGEDY. HE WENT TO THE CORNER OF THE BURSTING WEAPON AND FOR SEVERAL DAYS AND NIGHTS, FATHER AND SON HAD TALKED TOGETHER TO REVEAL IT IN THE BOY'S GIFT.



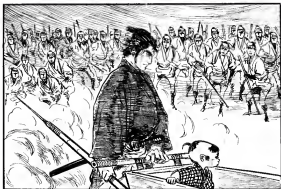
NOW HAD IT BE FORGOTTEN TO REMEMBER THAT WHEN THEY WERE IN THE WEAPON SPHERE, THERE WAS WRITTEN IN BLOOD INCHONCHU'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT?

















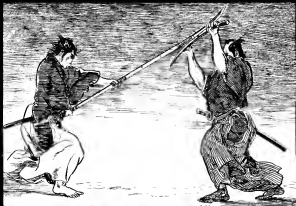


























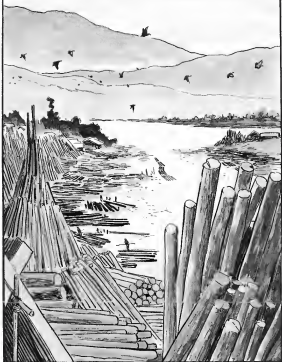


the thirty-fifth

Night Stalker



THE WAY STATION OF KAMAI ON THE
MANASSENDU HIGHWAY THE CONFLUENCE
OF THE KISO AND NIRA RIVERS MADE
KAMAI THE LARGEST LUMBER CENTER
ON THIS HEAVILY TRAVELED
MOUNTAIN ROUTE.

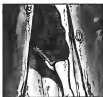






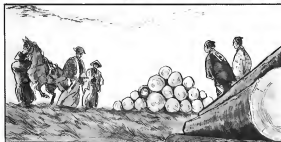


















THERE'S A LOT OF LOOSE TALK IN THE ARMY ABOUT THIS RUMOR. TOO MUCH FOR MY TASTE.



YES, PRINCESS AKA HAS NO OTHER SUITORS NOT SURPRISING, AS THE RUMORS ARE TRUE—SHE IS COMELY, BUT INDEED, SOMEWHAT...*LOW*. THE DISSENTS SAY OUR LORD ONLY WANTS HER HIS WIFE TO GET AT ZAKU'S VAST TREASURES.



IF I MAY SAY SO, SIR—THE CLAIM IS NOT WITHOUT MERIT.

QUITE. OUR OWN STOCK OF QUALITY WOOD BUNDLES BY THE YEAR. OUR ARMY DEPENDS ON IIDA LUMBER'S SUCCESS, AND THE ONLY WAY WE CAN KEEP THEM PROFITABLE IS TO LINK UP WITH ZAKU, AND COMBINE OUR STRENGTHS. PROSPERITY WILL FOLLOW FOR ALL. JINNAH.



ZAKU NEEDS OUR RUBBER TO GET THEIR LUMBER TO MARKET...

...AND THEY'RE DESPERATE FOR THE SKILLS OF IIDA LUMBER'S MEN.

THE ARMY COMES FIRST.



HOWEVER, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT THE RADICALS MIGHT DO.

TOMORROW'S SECURITY MUST BE PERFECT.

YES, SIR!



THIS PURCHASING INSPECTION IS JUST AN EXCUSE. OUR REAL PURPOSE IS TO SHOW PRINCESS AKA SOME FINCY LOS BOLLERS AND SUCH AND TO AMUSE HER—UNDERSTAND?

SHE WOULDN'T BE DISAPPOINTED, SIR!











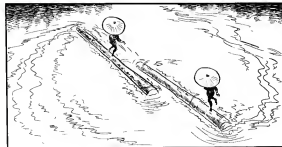






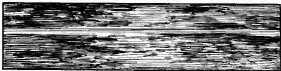






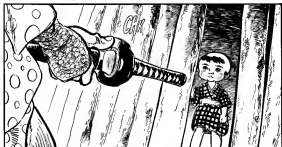
















WHO
WOULD DO
SUCH A
THING?



D-
DAMN
IT!



JINMEI!
DID YOU
NOT CATCH
HIM?

IT WAS YOUR
RESPONSIBILITY TO
ENSURE PERFECT
SECURITY, YOU...
FOOL..!!

I-I
HAVE AID
MURDER!



BUT...
WHO DID
IT??

OF COURSE I, JINMEI!
NOMOS WILL COME! SUPPORT!
IN PEASANCE! BUT FIRST I WILL
FIND THE VILLAIN AND BRING HIM
TO JUSTICE! THIS I
SWORE!















AK... OH



WARRI-
SAMURAI!

WHAT?
DID YOU
GET ANY
LEADS??



YES, SIR!
THREE DAYS AGO
A ROMAN AND HIS KID
LIED UP AT SHOGUN
TEMPLE!!

WHA--?
A ROMAN?

THEN HE
DISAPPEARED.
SHE LEFT THE
BOY BEHIND!



THAT
ROMAN
MIGHT
BE THE
KILLER!

AND
THAT BOY
IS HIS
ONLY!



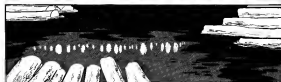
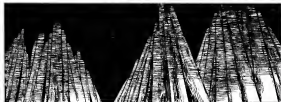


















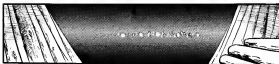




THEN...
THE BOY
SPEAKS
TRUE?

HEH...WELL,
IT LOOKS LIKE
YOU'VE FORCED
MY HAND.

SHOUT FOR
HELP ALL YOU
LIKE, ANYTIME.
NO ONE WILL
HEAR!



EH...?!

I ORDERED
ALL THE MEN
OFF TO SEARCH
SHOGU TEMPLE.

THE 'KILLER'
IS HIDEAWAY
THERE...DIDN'T
YOU KNOW?
HEH, HEH,
HEH...



YOU
ARE ALONE!!
NO HELP THIS
TIME!

SO? ARE YOU READY TO
DIE? AFTER ALL, CHANZOKU-
SAMAN, YOU'D HAVE TO COMMIT
SUICIDE OVER THIS SCANDAL,
ANYWAY. JUST THINK OF IT AS
BEING YOUR *SEISHANSEI*...
IN ADVANCE!

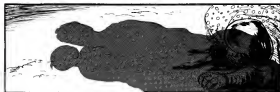












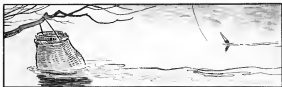


the thirty-sixth

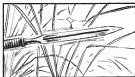
Cloud Dragon, Wind Tiger

































I'VE ALWAYS
LOVED THIS VISION...
FORGIVE ME FOR
BIGHTING UPON
SEEING IT ONCE
MORE BEFORE
I DIE.

I DON'T KNOW
HOW IT WAS IN THE
DAYS OF JOSEPH...
BUT THERE CANNOT BE
HAPPY DREAMS TODAY WHO
WOULD CHOOSE SUCH
A PLACE TO DIE.

....
....



YET, ONCE
WE ALL WERE
WARRIORS IN OUR
HEARTS. WE LONG
FOR DEATH ON
THE FIELD OF
BATTLE.

WHAT GREATER
SATISFACTION THAN
TO KNOW THAT MY
BLOOD STAINS THESE
FIELDS. THANK YOU
FOR GRANTING
THIS WISH.

BY
THE
WAY...

...WILL YOU
GRANT ME
ONE MORE
INDULGENCE?

WHAT
MIGHT THAT
BE, MY
LORD?



SWAN IT'S,
KOHJI KAKIMOTO...
I HEAR YOU ARE
A MASTER OF
SHUO-KUJI.

WOULD YOU
SHOW ME THAT
HIDDEN SECRET
OF YOUR SCHOOL,
THE HAIKI-SHAKUJI
STREET?





O-SANVASHIRO
HARABE, SHONEN
MILITARY ATTACHE
TO OUR LORD.



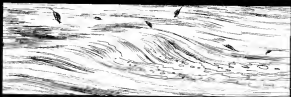
HARABE PRACTICES
THE FANSHU-KYU, AND IS
THE FOREMOST SWORDSMAN
OF OUR HAI. EVEN IF YOU
USE SHONEN KAKI BLADES,
HE CAN STOP HIS SWORD
A SAI'S BREADTH AWAY.
IS THIS ACCEPTABLE?



WITH
SHONEN
MY LORD
...?

VERY
WELL.
LET IT
BE. SO?

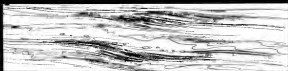
















OUR LORD
WANTED TO STRIKE
ONE BLOW AGAINST THAT
INFESTED HOLEPWOOD GHOST
ON ITTO'S ROSES!
YOU CAN'T TELL ME
YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND
HIS INTENT!

WHY, ANKASST?

YOUR TASHAN-EYE
SOME STANCE MIGHT
HAVE PERMANENT!
WHY DID YOU
THROW AWAY YOUR
ONLY CHANCE FROM
THE OUTSIDE?



IF ANYONE
COULD HAVE KILLED
OLAM ITTO, IT WAS
YOU, THE TASHAN-EYE
MASTER, ANKASST
OYCHENT!

IT WAS
ONLY BECAUSE
HE HAD SUCH
HOPE...

...THAT OUR
LORD ACCEPTED
THE DISHONOR
OF DEFEAT
OUTSIDE HIS
CASTLE!

EVEN
YOU!



YES...
I MIGHT HAVE
PREVENTED

I
MIGHT
HAVE...







OVER THERE IS WHERE OUR LORD COMMITTED SEPPUKU, AND YOU PERFORMED KASHIMASI!

OUR OWN DUEL TOOK PLACE ABOUT THERE.



THE RIVER FLOWS, BUT THE WATER NEVER RETURNS. THE CLOUDS, TOO, ALWAYS CHANGING... MOON AND SUN, ETERNAL TRAVELERS.



THE SHADENRY MONK LOOKS BACK. LIFE IN DEATH. THAT IS ALL WE HAVE.

FAREWELL.













I NEED
YOU TO KILL
A SINGLE MAN...
A **ROBIN**.



HE
LIVES BY
THE BANKS OF
THE SHIMOGU
RIVER.



USUALLY
I'D JUST SEND
OUT MY MEN TO
DISPOSE OF HIM,
BUT...IT'S NOT
SO SIMPLE.

HE'S A LOYAL
RETAINER OF THE
FORMER DAIMIO ARIMA,
DECEASED FOUR YEARS
AGO, AND A MASTER OF
TACHIBANA-STYLE SWORDSMANSHIP.
FORMERLY KNOWN AS SHOGUN,
NOW HE GOES BY THE
NAME **ASHIKITA**.



THE COMMONERS
HAD A GREAT FEELING FOR HIM. AS BEST I CAN TELL,
HE SPENDS HIS DAYS WORKING
HIS SMALL FIELD AND FISHING
FOR HIS MEAL.

WHEN EDO
SENT ME HERE
TO TAKE OVER
THE AREA, OF COURSE
THE SUBJECT
OF THIS *SONNA*
CAME UP.



MY SENIOR
ADVISORS WERE
DEEPLY IMPRESSED
THEY SAW HIM LIVING
NO BETTER THAN
A PEASANT IN
ORDER TO HONOR
HIS DEPARTED
LORD...

SEEKING NO NEW
MASTER, NOR LEAVING THE
LAND WHERE HIS LORD HAD
DIED. THEY CALLED HIM AN
INSPIRATION, THE VERY
MODEL OF THE TRUE
BUZEN. AND SINCE THEY
PERCEIVED HIM SO HIGHLY,
I CHOSE TO LEAVE
HIM ALONE!



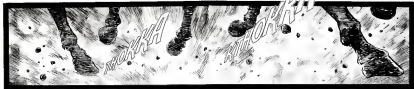
BUT OUR
NOT-BLOODED
YOUNG AMBASSADOR
SAW IT
DIFFERENTLY.

IT'S THE
SAME OLD, OLD
STORY—DIFFERENT
GENERATIONS,
DIFFERENT
PERCEPTIONS...











THAT
PITIFUL
DAY...



...THREE
OF OUR YOUNG
WASHT WERE RACING
THEIR HORSES...















ROSE GAUSS
WENT CHIRPING OUT AT
THE NEWS. THEY NEVER
RETURNED A DOUBAI OR
MORE. ALL OUT
DOWN!



AND
JUST TODAY,
ANOTHER
50K.

HIS SKILL IS
FERRYPING OUR
ARM STRICTLY FORGES
PRIVATE FIELDS. BUT I
SIMPLY CAN'T STAND
BY ANY LONGER

PARADE
ARMY BE ALIM-
ATED. EVEN IT MEANS
CALLING OUT OUR
ARCHERY AND INFIL
COMPANIES.



BUT IF THE STORY
SPREADS, WHAT THEN? WE'D
BE THE LAUGHINGSTOCK OF THE
COUNTRY—SENDING AN ARMY TO
FIGHT A SINGLE ROWAN? AREN'T
THERE ANY BOUNTY IN
TARABARI ARMY?"















THE TRUE
WARRIOR SHOULD
FACE DEATH CALMLY,
WITH NO REGRETS
IN HIS HEART.

I DIDN'T WANT FUTURE
GENERATIONS TO MOCK MY
LORD FOR AN UNSEEMLY DEATH,
AND THUS I' ACCCEPTED THE
STIGMA OF DISLOYALTY,
AND A LIFE OF
SHAME.



DO
YOU BELIEVE
THOSE, MY LAST
WORDS BEFORE
DEATH...?

THEY SAY THAT THE
CLOUDS MAKE THE DRAGON
FLY, THE WIND MAKES THE
TIGER RUN...THERE IS NOTHING
MORE TRAGIC THAN A DRAGON
WITHOUT THE CLOUD, A TIGER
WITHOUT THE WIND.

A LORD LOOKS FOR
RETAINERS WHO CAN BE
HIS WIND AND HIS CLOUD.
IN TRUTH, THEY LONG
FOR A RETAINER SUCH
AS YOURSELF.



PERFECT
LOYALTY, BEYOND
DEATH. UNCHANGING, LIKE
THE RESOLVE YOU TAKE
FOR YOUR HONOR. LORD
ASIMA WAS BLESSED
WITH BOTH CLOUD
AND WIND.









the thirty-seventh

Inn of
the Last
Chrysanthemum

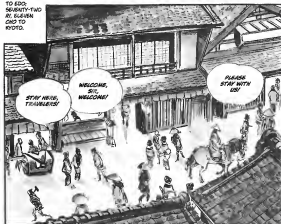


FIFTY-THREE STATIONS
OF TÔKAI-DÔ KANAYA
(KIRCHNER)





THE POST TOWN OF
KAMAYA, ON
THE TŌKAI
SHAN. FIFTY-
THREE KI-
MEI AND
TO SDO.
SEVENTY-TWO
KI. ELEVEN
AND TO
KYOTO.









DURING THE EDO PERIOD, JAPANESE WOMEN WHO WASHED THE FEET OF GUESTS, TIRSD FROM THEIR JOURNEYS—COULD BE FOUND AT STATION TOWNS ALONG THROUGH-OUT THE LENGTH OF JAPAN'S MAJOR BYWAYS.



THESE GIRLS DIFFERED NOT A WHIT FROM THE MASHIMORI-GIRLS WHO SERVED GUESTS THEIR MEALS.



THEY WERE
BOTH
EXPECTED...



...TO SLEEP
WITH THE GUESTS
ON DEMAND.



IN THE SLANG
OF THE TIMES,
OY-CHAN-
"PUT-OUT
GIRLS."





NO...? WHY,
ARE YOU?
AND HOW
PRETTY...



JUST MY
TYPE, MR. I'LL
SEE YOU IN MY
ROOM AFTER
DINNER!



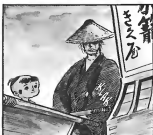
WELCOME
TO OUR ESTAB-
LISHMENT, SIR
THIS EVENING...



WHAT'S
WRONG,
O-CHAN?

NO
POINT IN
CRYING
NOW.

REALLY?
IT'S NOT
LIKE YOU'RE
A JORDAN
ANYMORE.













ER... FIRST
GIRL'S ALREADY
SPOKEN FOR,
SR...



...BUT IF YOU'D
LIKE A SPOT OF...
FUN, JUST SAY
THE WORD.

WE CAN
KEEP YOUR BOY
AMUSED FOR A
HOUR OR TWO
WHILE YOU—









THAT MORNING... HE
TOUCHED MY
PALM SO
NATURALLY...



...THIS PALM,
TRAINED TO
THE ASSASSIN
SHORT-SWORD...
ALMOST AS
IF HE WAS
DARKENING.

BUT
WHY...
NOW...?



WHY
ARE YOU
ASLEEP OR
SOMETHING
...?!



AT LEAST
ACT ALIVE,
DAMN IT!













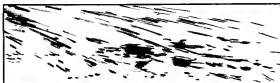






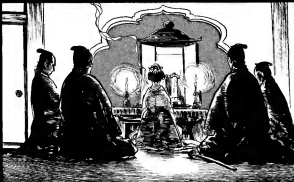
NOVEMBER THIRTIETH, FIFTH YEAR OF MEIREKI.
FUJIEDA YŪNOSHIN: HAN HORSE GUARD (ANNUAL
STIPEND, ONE HUNDRED FIFTY KOKU) DUE TO
TERMINATION OF DUTY OF THE AFOREMENTIONED
YŪNOSHIN FOLLOWING DEATH UNDER
UNACCEPTABLE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE FUJIEDA
HOUSEHOLD STIPEND IS SUSPENDED
INDEFINITELY.













MY BROTHER
WAS PLEDGED TO
O-MARI OF THE
SOTO CLAN!

THEY
WEREN'T FORMALLY
ANNOUNCED, BUT IT'S
FREE! AND YOU ALL
KNOW IT TO BE
THE CASE!

THE SOTO
CLAN ITSELF
ACKNOWLEDGED IT...
THEY'D EVEN PICKED
THE DAY TO ANNOUNCE
IT FORMALLY!

SO WHY??
WHY KILL
HIMSELF WITH
KILL-DOING??

EH...
OCHI-DOING...
NOT MANY PEOPLE
OUTSIDE OF THIS
ROOM KNOW ABOUT
O-MARI-SAM
AND YOUR BROTHER

YOU'D BE
VERY WISE
TO KEEP IT
THAT WAY,
TOO, HISS.

IT
COULD
FLURT
O-MARI-
SAM, YES?

YOU SEE,
O-MARI-SAM WILL SOON
BE O-SAMURAI'S IN THE CASTLE,
WITH ALL THAT IMPLIES. IT'S BEST
NOT TO SPEAK TOO FREELY,
OCHI-DOING.

WAAA—!!
BUT
O-MARI-SAM
WAS...

OUR LORD'S
PERSISTENCE
WON HER OVER...
SHE HAS AGREED
TO BE HIS
MISTRESS.

WE WON'T
EVEN BE ABLE
TO CALL HER
BY NAME.





ANPP
WH-WHAT
ARE YOU
POORPP

YOU
ASKED FOR IT
POORPPPP
DIEH-POACH

YOU WANT
TO KNOW
THE TRUTH
THEH. WE'LL
TELL YOU!





FIRST,
YOU GOTTA
UNDERSTAND THAT
O-NAGI-SAMU IS
AN AMBITIOUS
GUY!



AND THE SOTO
CLAN WMS ALL FOR IT.
OF COURSE... HOUSEWIFE
TO THE FUTURENS FOR
A MISERABLE ONE
HUNDRED FIFTY YEN!!...
OR A DAMEYO'S
MISTRESS?

NO...
THAT'S
COMPLI-
ANCE!





SO THE
SOTO CLAN
COOKED UP
A PLOT.



THEY KNEW
THERE WAS NO
POINT TRYING TO
GET THAT MULE-
HEADED YONGSHEN
TO AGREE TO
DROP THE
ENGAGEMENT.

HE WAS HEAD
OVER HEELS FOR
O-HAHE. SEE,
AND IF HE KICKED
UP A FUSS...
DAD MIGHT



SO...

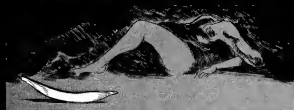




THEY
LOOKED AROUND
PICKED EDWARDS' KING.
THE DAUGHTER OF THE
WEALTHY RICE WHOLESALE
SHE WAS ALREADY STAYING
WITH THE FLORIDA COAST
STUDYING ETIQUETTE.
ANYWAY.

THE REST...
WHO KNOWS. FOR SURE?
BUT WE FIGURE THEY SLIPPED THEM
SOME KIND OF SLEEPING DRUG.
ARRANGED THEM TO LOOK
LIKE A SWIMMER...







SYNCHU
WITH A PREGNANT'S
DAUGHTER...? A
SCANDAL LIKE THAT
WOULD GET THE
WHOLE FUJIKURA CLAN
BANISHED FOR
GOOD.



LOOKS LIKE THEY
COVERED THEIR TRACKS
PRETTY WELL, TOO. EVEN
IF SOME OF US KNOW
BY OUR HEARTS WHAT
HAPPENED...WHO'S FOOL
ENOUGH TO MESS WITH
THE *SHAMANO*'S
KISHEEDU?



O-KAH-SHAM
SET HERSELF
UP FOR *WIFE*
AND YUKIOHSHU
GOT HIMSELF
KILLED LIKE A
FISH-HEADED
BRIGHT?



YOU WANT
TO HAVE
SOMEONE—
HATE
O-KAH-SHAM?

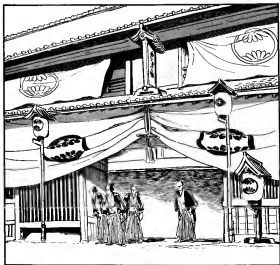


BUT
LIKE I SAID...
THERE'S NO
PROOF.



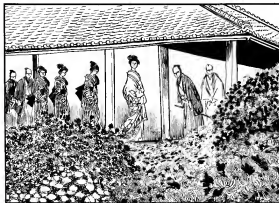
YOU'RE
JUST OUT
OF *WIFE*.































the thirty-eighth

**Penal
Code
Article
Seventy-
nine**

御定書七十九條

拾五歳以下之者

御仕置之事



JO-SHOMONKEN
ARTICLE SEVENTY-NINE:
THE PUNISHMENT OF
OFFENDERS FIFTEEN
AND UNDER.

一子心ニ弁なく

人を殺し候もつ

拾五歳迄

親類預け置

遠島

一子心ニ弁なく

火も附候もの

右同所

遠島

一盗いたし候もの

大人の御仕置より

一等

軽く申付くべし



"A. NO EXCUSE OF AGE
OO FOR MURDER
UNTIL AGE FIFTEEN
ENTRUSTED TO RELATIVES
THEN BANISHMENT TO
OFFSHORE ISLAND
OO FOR ARSON
SAME AS ITEM OO
OO FOR THEFT
PUNISHMENT LEVED ONE
DEGREE LIGHTER THAN
FOR ADULT OFFENDERS

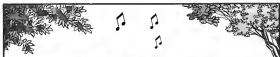
PUNISHMENTS FOR MINORS:
FLOGGING
A. OFFENDERS FIFTEEN
YEARS AND UNDER SHALL
BE ELIGIBLE TO BE FLOGGED

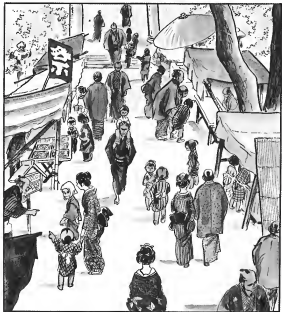
幼年のもの
敲之儀

十五歳以下ニても
敲申付くべき事











FLUTES AND DRUMS,
CARRIED FAINTLY ON
THE BREEZE



THE PAGELANT OF THE
FESTIVAL, SIGHT AND
SOUND, UNFOLDING
BEFORE HIS EYES...
NOT EVEN THIS STIC
CHILD COULD RESIST.



HE HAD
ONLY THREE...





























































ATTENTION!
I'M "SHO-MO-
JO" SANDO!
BEO JETTE-
MON!



I'M ON
THE TRAIL OF
THE NOTORIOUS
FEARFUL
PICKPOCKET,
"GLUCK-CHANG"
O-GYU!







HEAR ME
GUY? I BELIEVE
WE'VE COME INTO
THIS WORLD A
BLANK SLATE—
THERE ISN'T A
ONE OF US
BORN BAD
AT HEART!

LIFE CAN
HURTS US BAD!
THE THINGS AROUND
US STAIN OUR
SOULS!

SO
I DON'T HATE
THE CRIMINALS!
NO! I HATE THE
CRIME!



"EVIL
CAN RUN
A THOUSAND
MILES,"
THE SAYING
GOES!

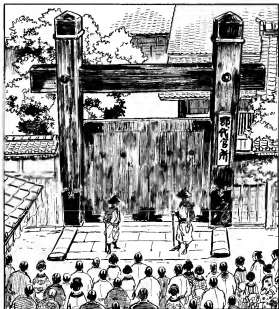
IF YOU
DON'T STOP IT,
IT SPREADS...
AND HURTS MORE
AND MORE PEOPLE,
AND IT CAN TURN
THAT EVIL
TOO!

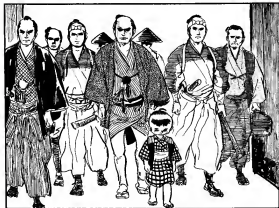


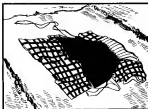












THE FLOGGING TOOK PLACE BEFORE THE JAWARD GATES. A LIGHT FLOGGING WAS FIFTY LASHES, A HEAVY FLOGGING, ONE HUNDRED. THE CRIMINAL WAS PLACED ON HIS STOMACH, AND WAS BEATEN ABOUT THE SHOULDERS, BACK AND BUTTOCKS. THE STROKES CONTINUED UNTIL LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS, THEN RESUED AFTER THE PRISONER RECOVERED. THE STICK USED FOR A FLOGGING MEASURED ONE SHAKU MIKE-SAN IN LENGTH AND FOUR SAN FIVE BOU IN CIRCUMFERENCE, AND WAS MADE OF BUNDLED CANE, WRAPPED TIGHT WITH LONG STRIPS OF PAPER.



"THAT
POOR
GELD..."

BUT
HAVE YOU
EVER SEEN
SUCH A TOUGH
LITTLE GUY?
AMAZING!

REALLY?
HE ISN'T
EVEN
FRAIL!











IT'S
ALL RIGHT,
SWEETIE.

YOU CAN
TELL HIM I
SAID IT TO
YOUR



NO!



WHY...
WHY ARE YOU
PROTECTING HIM?
JUST SAY IT
WAS ME!

NO!



DAD!
WHAT'S WITH
THIS KID?



ALL
RIGHT, FORD
ARE YOU REALLY?
"QUACK-CHUCK"
O-CHIN!

F-FORD!
I AM! I
SWEAR!



DO YOU
KNOW THIS
BOY? IS HE A
RELATIVE?

NO! I
NEVER SAW HIM
BEFORE! I
JUST GRABBED
HIM AT
RANDOM!



SORRY
I'M GOING
TO ASK YOU
ONE MORE
THING

NO!

OH,
PLEASE!!



WELL...
STUPID.











O-CHO...
DID YOU SAY
ANYTHING TO
HIM WHEN YOU
SAW HIM THE
WILGETT?

HE'S SANOCHI!
I CAN'T HELP
FEELING THAT
HE'S DOING
THIS OUT OF
DUTY!



I...I JUST
SAID...PLEASE
THIS FOR ME,
PLEASE?

KIKU, I
KNOW IT, HE'S
DOING HIS BEST
NOT TO ~~ANYWAY~~
YOU TO ADMIT
THAT YOU
ASKED HIM



WHY ELSE
SHOULD HE
PROTECT
YOU?

HIS PARENTS
NEAINT COME
FORWARD TO CLAM
HIM YOU THINK
HE COULD BE
ORPHANEED?



OR MAYBE
THERE'S
SOME-
THING
ELSE WE'LL
NEVER
KNOW

O-CHO HAS
CONCEALED THAT
WILL HAVE TO BE
ENOUGH, AFT
HIM DO?



I'M
SORRY, SON.
IT'S OVER
YOUR
FEARS.



O-DARLING...?
TO THANK YOU,
I...I PROMISE -

...I'LL
NEVER
STEAL...
ANMORE, EVER
AGAIN!





A WOLF
CHILD...
RAISED TO
SLAUGHTER,
LIVING FOR
VENGEANCE.



THREE
YEARS OLD...
AND ALREADY
DESTINY'S
CHILD...

LOVE, WOLF AND GOD BROTHER: THE END
TO BE CONTINUED

GLOSSARY

anago

Underworld slang for a woman crime boss, or the wife of a crime boss. A demon of *ano*, or elder sister.

banatō

The chief clerk in charge at *mins*, bathhouses, and other establishments, similar to today's hotel managers.

bu

Approximately 3 millimeters.

bushi

A samurai. A member of the warrior class.

bushidō

The way of the warrior.

cho

Old unit of measurement. Approximately 149 meters (139 yards).

crucifixion

One form of punishment in the Edo period was to be nailed or tied to an "X"-shaped wooden frame fixed in the ground and exposed to the elements until death.

currency

bu – A small coin, worth 1/4th of a *ryō*.

mon – A copper coin.

kan – A bundle of 1,000 *mon*.

monme – A silver piece.

ryō – A gold piece, worth 60 *monme* or 4 *kan*.

shū – Edo-period coin. Worth 1/16th of a *ryō*.

daikan

The primary local representative of the shōgunate in territories outside of the capital of Edo. The *daikan* and his staff collected taxes owed to Edo and oversaw public works, agriculture, and

other projects administered by the central government.

daikansho

The office of the *daikan*.

daimyō

A feudal lord.

"the five lusts"

Gyoku. The Buddhists describe five primal human *lusts*: the lust for wealth, for eros, for food, for social advancement, and for sleep.

funai

The inner wards of Edo, home to the samurai class.

go-daishi-hiraki

A traditional folk festival (later loosely linked to Buddhist teachings) held in late January.

go-dō

The five levels in the cycle of Buddhist reincarnation: heaven, human, beast, starvation, hell.

go-yō

Official business. As a lantern carried by the officers of the *daikaz* magistrate, the equivalent of today's national police, or as the shout of the police apprehending a criminal, "*go-yō*" was one of the most dreaded words in the world of Edo Japan's criminal elements.

gundai

Commissioner. In areas administered directly by the shōgunate rather than by a local *kan*, the *daikaz* magistrate was superseded by the *gundai*, who performed the taxation and law-enforcement duties of the *daikaz* but over a larger territory.

gundai kansho

Office of the commissioner

han

A feudal domain

hanshi

Samurai in the service of a *han*

Ando Hiroshige

One of the most famous woodblock artists of all time. The depicted panel is Kojima's homage to a scene from Hiroshige's series of scenic sights along the Tōkaidō highway from Edo to Gokuransaga, the ancient capital of Kyoto

honjin

The lodgings for *daimyō* and senior *shōgunate* officials

honoriifics

Japan is a class and status society, and proper forms of address are critical. Common markers of respect are the prefixes *o* and *go*, and a wide range of suffixes. Some of the suffixes you will encounter in *Love Ho! and Oshichiyo*:

chan – for children, young women, and close friends

awa – archaic; used for higher-ranked or highly respected figures

awa – used for superiors

san – the most common, used among equals or near-equals

sensei – used for teachers, masters, respected entertainers, and politicians

hōzuki

The Chinese lantern flower. Its bony, crimson-orange seed pods never lose their color, even after the plant has died. Japanese children like to chew on the round, rubbery seeds, and sometimes blow through the pods like whistles.

jitte-mon

A policeman. The street cops of the Edo period carried *jitte*, a specialized weapon about 18 inches long, with no-cutting edge—just two prongs designed to catch and snap off an opponent's sword blade.

kaishaku

A second. In the rite of *seppuku*, a samurai was allowed death with honor by cutting his own abdomen. After the incision was complete, the second would perform *kaijisha*, severing the samurai's head for a quick death. The second was known as a *kaishakunin*.

kenkyaku

Swordsmen, *kenshi*

kōgi kaishakunin

The *shōgun*'s own second, who performed executions ordered by the *shōgun*.

koku

A bale of rice. The traditional measure of a *han*'s wealth, a measure of its agricultural land and productivity.

Meireki

The reigns of the emperors were given special, felicitous names, or *rengo*. Sometimes there were several such *rengo* during a single emperor's reign. *Meireki* is one such *rengo*.

metsuke

Inspector. A post combining the functions of chief of police and chief intelligence officer.

ō-bangashira

The supreme commander of a *han*'s standing guard (or *bari*) of samurai, charged to protect the lord and castle.

ō-metsuke

Chief inspector. The senior law-enforcement officer of the *shōgunate*, reporting directly to the *ryō* senior councilors who advised the *shōgun*.

O-Sadamegaki

Short for Kujigata O-Sadamegaki. The concordance of *shōgunate* laws, compiled in 1742.

ri

Old unit of measurement. Approximately 4 kilometers (2.5 miles).

rōjō

Senior counselors. The inner circle of counselors directly advising the shōgun. The rōjō were the ultimate advisory body to the Tokugawa shōgunate's national government.

Rongo

The *Analects of Confucius*.

rōnin

A nameless samurai. Literally, "one adrift on the waves." Members of the samurai caste who have lost their masters through the dissolution of *han*, expulsion for misbehavior, or other reasons. Prohibited from working as farmers or merchants under the strict Confucian caste system imposed by the Tokugawa shōgunate, many impoverished *rōnin* became "hired guns" for whom the code of the samurai was nothing but empty words.

ryū

Often translated as "school." The many variations of swordsmanship and other martial arts were passed down from generation to generation to the offspring of the originator of the technique or set of techniques, and to any *deshi* students that sought to learn from the master. The largest schools had their own daily training centers and scores of students. An effective swordsman had to study the different techniques of the various schools to know how to block them in combat. Many ryū also had a set of special, secret techniques that were only taught to school initiates.

Sado Island

Sado-jima, a cold and desolate island in the Japan sea off the coast of northern Honshu, has been a place of exile in Japan dating back to the eighth century A.D. After the discovery of gold on the island, labor in the gold mines of Sado was a virtual death sentence.

sengoku

Warring states. For two centuries between the old central rule in Kyoto and the rise of Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), the first

unifier of Japan, the country was in a state of anarchy, riven by constant civil war between rival warlords.

seppuku

The right to kill oneself with honor to atone for failure, or to follow one's master into death. Only the samurai class was allowed this glorious but excruciating death. The abdomen was cut horizontally, followed by an upward cut to spill out the intestines. When possible, a *kisakubane* performed a beheading after the cut was made to shorten the agony.

shaku

10 *sun*, approximately 30 centimeters.

Shikkyō

"Shi King," in Chinese. The oldest poetry collection in Chinese literature.

shinjū

A double-suicide. Given Edo-period Japan's strict caste structure, star-crossed lovers often found suicide a tragic last resort. *Shinjū* were one of the staples of Edo-period theatre and literature, not to mention the scandal sheets.

sokushitsu

The concubine of a *daimyō*. There was no stigma in old Japan to powerful men having mistresses in addition to their wives, and an *o-sokushin* shared the respect and influence of her powerful patron. *O-sokushin* literally means "the room next door" — for obvious reasons.

sucumono-giri

Cutting through a stationary object.

sun

Approximately 3 centimeters.

Tsukuda

Tsukuda-jima, a small island near the mouth of the Sagami River in old Edo. Now surrounded by landfill, it was a fishing port and a center for unskilled labor.

zanbatō

The mythical horse-slicing stroke used by Ōgami Hōō.

KAZUO KOIKE

Though widely respected as a powerful writer of graphic fiction, Kazuo Koike has spent a lifetime reaching beyond the bounds of the comics medium. Aside from co-creating and writing the successful *Love Wolf and Cub* and *Crying Freeman* manga, Koike has hosted television programs; founded a golf magazine; produced movies; written popular fiction, poetry, and screenplays; and mentored some of Japan's best manga talents.

Love Wolf and Cub was first serialized in Japan in 1970 (under the title *Kozure Okami*) in *Manga Action* magazine and continued its hugely popular run for many years, being collected as the stories were published, and reprinted worldwide. Koike collected numerous awards for his work on the series throughout the next decade. Starting in 1972, Koike adapted the popular manga into a series of six films, the *Baby Cart Assassin* saga, garnering widespread commercial success and critical acclaim for his screenwriting.

This wasn't Koike's only foray into film and video. In 1996, *Crying Freeman*, the manga Koike created with artist Ryōichi Ikegami, was

produced in Hollywood and released to commercial success in Europe and is currently awaiting release in America.

And to give something back to the medium that gave him so much, Koike started the *Gekiga Senjaku*, a college course aimed at helping talented writers and artists — such as *Ranma 1/2* creator Rumiko Takahashi — break into the comics field.

The driving focus of Koike's narrative is character development, and his commitment to character is clear: "Comics are carried by characters. If a character is well created, the comic becomes a hit." Kazuo Koike's continued success in comics and literature has proven this philosophy true.



GOSEKI KOJIMA

Goseki Kojima was born on November 3, 1928, the very same day as the godfather of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. While just out of junior high school, the self-taught Kojima began painting advertising posters for movie theaters to pay his bills.

In 1950, Kojima moved to Tokyo, where the postwar devastation had given rise to special manga forms for audiences too poor to buy the new manga magazines. Kojima created art for *kami-shibui*, or “paper-play” narrators, who would use manga story sheets to present narrated street plays. Kojima moved on to creating works for the *kashi-don* market, bookstores that rented out books, magazines, and manga to mostly low-income readers. He soon became highly popular among *kashi-don* readers.

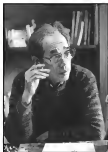
In 1967, Kojima broke into the magazine market with his series *Bonuki*. As the manga magazine market grew and diversified, he turned out a steady stream of popular series

In 1970, in collaboration with Kazuo Koike, Kojima began the work that would seal his reputation, *Gosei*

Okami (*Love Wolf and Cub*). Before long the story had become a gigantic hit, eventually spinning off a television series, six motion pictures, and even theme song records. Koike and Kojima were soon dubbed the “golden duo” and produced success after success on their way to the pinnacle of the manga world.

When *Manga Japan* magazine was launched in 1994, Kojima was asked to serve as consultant, and he helped train the next generation of manga artists.

In his final years, Kojima turned to creating original graphic novels based on the movies of his favorite director, Akira Kurosawa. Kojima passed away on January 5, 2000 at the age of 71.



THE RONIN REPORT

by Tim Ervin

The Women of *Lone Wolf and Cub*

As Ratti and Westbrook state in *Secrets of the Samurai*, “the frequently myopic views of chroniclers of later ages and periods, bent upon reinforcing the preconceived notions of their patrons, tend largely to either denigrate woman’s role in the military history of early civilizations or ignore it entirely.” In the depths of feudal Japanese history, women are often poorly represented, as if their contributions were erased from the books in order to propel the advances of men. This is an activity observable in just about every culture throughout history. But women have refused to stay down, and continue to resist patriarchal societies, which might prefer to keep them in a subservient role. Pushing their ideas and leadership abilities to the fore, women have always been major players in society, albeit occasionally in backroom roles. Increasingly, history books are being rewritten to bring a focus back to women’s roles in every realm of society. In Japan, there are numerous

examples of women rising above society's restrictions, and Koike and Kojima do a fair job of giving women their deserved attention.

The pages of *Lone Wolf and Cub* present women in numerous societal roles: poor, rich, powerful, weak, young, old, fat, skinny, sexy, not so sexy, mean, kind, etc. And, aside from the roles that some historians would have you believe women filled, Koike and Kojima chose to place women in prominent positions, often heading a group of assassins here, running a Yakuza brothel over there, and performing the arts of war just about everywhere. Not only does this better help the reader to understand and sympathize for the whole of feudal Japanese society, but it also makes for a far more interesting (and sexually charged) read.

For instance, as early as the second story of the *Lone Wolf and Cub* continuum, the reader is pulled into the ruthless and shady scheme of Lady O-Sen, a woman of unbounded aspiration in her quest to be the behind-the-scenes ruler of her clan and, therefore, her *han*. Like the governors of states, *han* lords held bountiful power, collecting taxes from the commoners,

and reporting directly to the Shogun. In “A Father Knows His Child’s Heart, as Only a Child Can Know His Father’s” (Vol. 1), the Lady O-sen uses her sexuality and guile to lure samurai into her evil plot, offering her body and receiving their loyalty in return. In the end, of course, O-Sen winds up on the wrong side of Ogami’s sword, politics being the means to her abrupt end.

But the ambitious woman is not the predominant female image in *Lone Wolf and Cub*. In fact, only two chapters later, in the story “Baby Cart on the River Styx,” Ogami and Daigoro meet a group of Yakuza who employ little Daigoro to suckle the breast of an ailing woman. In this story, Koike positions the woman as a sword-carrying equal amongst Yakuza brothers. Though much of the Yakuza business centers around female trades (prostitution in particular), current studies suggest that women’s roles in Japanese organized crime were limited, with a few exceptions, such as an instance when a leader’s wife makes decisions for the family in the event of his death. The reasons cited for this exclusion are usually based on an assumed weakness of women. However, Koike wrote women into leadership roles within feudal organized-crime families in numerous stories.

In the eighteenth chapter, “The Virgin and the Whore” (Vol. 3), a woman who heads a brothel hunts a girl who killed one of her procurers in self-defense. Ogami stands in the way of “floating world” business dealings, and the situation becomes immediately tense. However, the madam’s bearing and wisdom suggest a deep understanding of samurai politics and a firm grip on her underlings within the organization. It could be assumed that, in feudal times, women had a better understanding of the samurai culture, and, having a coincidental impression of honor and desire to continue the bloodline, they were likely more adept in leadership of crime families. This logical path makes Koike and Kojima’s stories more believable, and the reader’s interest is piqued by the commanding, intelligent, and often martially skilled women populating the stories.

It is in the wielding of weapons that Koike and Kojima best expressed the fury of the female. Both women mentioned in the last paragraph carried weapons in their respective stories but never used them. However, as early as the seventh chapter of *Love Wolf and Cub*, “The Eight Gates of Deceit” (Vol. I), women take up arms against our protagonist and use

them in an attempt to kill him. In fact, eight women using different ferocious techniques try to kill the unstoppable Ogami. The eight make up the main guard of their *han*, one being the captain of the guard and main martial instructor. Placing the women willfully behind the sword makes for a remarkably dramatic plot and dissolves any expectation of timid helplessness in women. In another moving story, "The Performer," a woman rises from the lower caste to become the female martial arts trainer, or *besshiki-onna*, of a *han*. The tale winds down to eventual tragedy, but not before the woman exacts her revenge upon a man with her superior technique. According to some scholars, the act of a woman taking up arms was not such a rare thing. Ratti and Westbrook note that there were notable woman warriors in Japanese history, such as Tomoe Gozen, wife of General Kiso no Yoshinaka. She was described as exceptionally strong and hauntingly beautiful and was the subject of many plays and poems. In a particularly historic incident, Tomoe beheaded an enemy general for tearing the sleeve of her kimono. Indeed, women were often the last defense for a village in times of war, so their martial skills tended to be quite important, if not celebrated.

Not to weave too far from the perceived truth, Koike and Kojima also cast many women into roles considered traditional, romantic, or expected. There are many sympathetic common women throughout the *Lone Wolf and Cub* series, such as the rice-planting women in "Black Wind" (Vol. 5), shown as a positive work force in the face of hard times. Ogami looks upon their country wisdom with respect, adapting their beliefs into his role as an assassin. In "Wings to the Bird, Fangs to the Beast" (Vol. 1), Ogami receives and returns the respect of a sympathetic and wise prostitute. In this story, the prostitute shows more honor and bearing than one samurai in the same predicament. Imprisoned by a band of brigands who demand to witness a sex act as entertainment, the prostitute defends Ogami's honor, and in return, he has sex with her to keep her from being murdered. Not much of a sacrifice, you might think, but as the prostitute says to the less honorable samurai a few panels after the consummated act, "when you're shaking and peeing in your pants that you're going to die, could you satisfy a woman?" This reiterates Ogami's virility and capabilities (now as a lover as well as a fighter) and places a woman of questionable honor in an air of higher respect than all of the men (save Ogami) around her.

Though it is explained a few chapters later that the prostitute had once lived a better life, a prostitute in feudal Japan might have earned such strong character and understanding of honor due to her occupation. According to George Scott's *The History of Prostitution*, "in no other country on the face of the earth has the woman of easy virtue received the respect accorded to her in Japan." Indeed, the Japanese courtesan, geisha, and/or prostitute largely carried the responsibility of creating and passing culture amongst society. Also, since the samurai were a large part of the customer base for courtesans, their culture passed through the ladies, probably finding refinement along the way.

Encompassing some of the aforementioned elements, the story "The Performer" features a woman who rose from the low caste of a street performer to become the *besshiki onna*, training the other women of a *han* court on the skills of war. As explained in the story, such a rise was unlikely, so her story is one of great pride and honor. However, as the tale turns tragic, the woman must defend her honor the only way she knows how, with the cold blade of vengeance.

Similarly, in “Inn of the Last Chrysanthemum,” from this very volume, a young girl works at an inn, patiently awaiting her opportunity for revenge. As stated in the story, the girls working the inns commonly served as prostitutes. In fact, as Oliver Statler wrote in his charming tome *Japanese Inn*, “prostitutes were almost indispensable to a Japanese inn.” He went on to discuss some of the very elements seen in the above story: girls competing in the streets for the attention of weary travelers and nervous managers worried about the caste of their clientele. In this chapter of *Lone Wolf and Cub*, the young girl would be of a lower caste of prostitutes, but it’s what she’s hiding that sets her apart. That classic samurai desire for revenge boils within her, and only one as sharp as Ogami can sense it. Vengeance may not have been exclusively a samurai element, but they certainly seemed to corner the market. A family’s place in Japanese society seemed so important that if a samurai lost face by means of another’s dishonesty, a baby not yet born might be expected to eventually find the existing head of the offending samurai’s family and kill him (or her, as the case may be).

The combination of samurai sister and innocent prostitute serves as an excellent example of Koike and Kojima's artful use of feudal Japanese women in *Lone Wolf and Cub* — a girl passing into womanhood, of samurai birth, yet lost to the painful world of a roadside inn *de-onna*. The balance of the honorable society with the common and the retention of sensational emotion make for a well-developed character, and the element of vengeance not only motivates the character, but connects her to the underlying theme of *Lone Wolf and Cub*. The women Ogami meets on his journeys are the only people who share his dedication to revenge. If Koike and Kojima were to be credited with one thing, character development would be at the top of the list. As it says in his biography, Koike believes that "comics are carried by characters." And the colorful, intense flavor of female characters in *Lone Wolf and Cub* certainly reflects that philosophy.

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